

VZCZCXRO4588
RR RUEHAST
DE RUEHAK #3436/01 1611916
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 101916Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6470
INFO RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0853
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0768
RHEBAAA/DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 003436

SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TO USGS FOR MFOOSE AND ESAFAK
USAID FOR OFDA

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [EINV](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY'S DISASTER MANAGEMENT - UNTESTED - SLOWLY
MATURING

REF: A) ISTANBUL 693

B) 05 ANKARA 6077
C) 05 ANKARA 497

ANKARA 00003436 001.3 OF 003

Sensitive But Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

This cable was coordinated with Istanbul Consulate General

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: After the devastating 1999 Marmara earthquake in Turkey, the World Bank made recovery loans contingent on broad changes in Turkey's building codes and disaster management mechanisms. This included creation of a "Turkish Emergency Management Directorate" (TEMAD), which was established in 2000. Although Turkey's disaster preparation and planning has clearly improved since the earthquake, responsibility is still shared by a variety of players, and TEMAD is still relatively new and untested in its critical coordinating role for a multitude of local, provincial, and national players. Showing its intent to be serious, this year TEMAD organized a national level disaster simulation exercise and co-sponsored (with USAID OFDA) an international disaster assistance conference in Istanbul. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) BACKGROUND: Turkey is highly vulnerable to a major earthquake, especially the population mass centered around Istanbul and the Marmara Sea. Turkey's response to the August 1999 - 7.4 magnitude earthquake that killed more than 17,000 people was widely criticized as slow, insufficient, and uncoordinated. As a consequence, the World Bank's Marmara Earthquake Emergency Reconstruction Project (MEER, 2000-2004) required the establishment of the Turkish Emergency Management Directorate (TEMAD or TAY in Turkish) under the Prime Ministry, along with other changes in building codes and regulation.

TEMAD Still in its Infancy - can it really coordinate?

¶3. (SBU) TEMAD was created under 2000 legislation, but has slowly been gaining competence and authority. A 2005 law assigned it the critical role of coordinating national national disaster response (Refs B and C), but its resources and personnel remain limited. For the moment located in cramped offices downtown, TEMAD plans to move to a new

crisis coordination center outside Ankara's center at the end of this year. As a result of the 1999 earthquake, there are now a variety of new and old crisis centers operating at the local and national levels, which will all in turn require overall national coordination, the role assigned to TEMAD. TEMAD's director Hasan Ipek is viewed as experienced and competent, but his limited staff lacks deep experience. Ipek and his staff like to use the metaphor that the organization is still taking its "baby steps" and welcomes assistance of more mature organizations like the U.S. FEMA.

14. (SBU) TEMAD and USAID OFDA co-hosted a recent high-level conference on international cooperation among "emerging donors" for disaster relief and assistance in Istanbul (Ref A). Turkey's hosting and co-chairing the conference was a clear symbol of the importance it attaches to increasing its regional and international role in disaster assistance. USAID's counterpart organization Turkish International Cooperation Administration (TIKA), which coordinates Turkey's response to disasters outside Turkey, like last year's Pakistan earthquake, also helped organize the conference.

Locality and Province Bear First Responsibility - Istanbul

15. (SBU) Under Turkey's disaster plans, in the event of a disaster the provincial governor bears first responsibility for response and recovery, and serves as chairman at a local crisis center. Depending on the scale of the disaster and response effort, national resources can be mobilized. Bearing a unique threat because of its seismology and population, the Istanbul Municipality established its AKOM (Disaster Coordination Center), modeled after a comparable center in Los Angeles, after the 1999 earthquake. On a recent visit by Embassy and Consulate General Officers, AKOM Director Necdet Berber proudly showed off the center's video

ANKARA 00003436 002.3 OF 003

screens (attached to 10 cameras in the municipality) and communication equipment. He said the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had worked closely with AKOM and police, fire department, and other services in augmenting communication capacity and planning for reducing casualties and improving response. Municipalities bear direct responsibilities for disaster planning, prevention, and preparedness activities on the local level. The Istanbul Municipality worked with local universities to produce a comprehensive Earthquake Master Plan for Istanbul in 2005.

16. (SBU) The Istanbul Deputy Governor has overall regional responsibility for disaster coordination. On a recent visit to the Governor's Office, the Deputy Governor's crisis center looked much more modest and makeshift compared to the municipality's flashy new AKOM. A TEMAD Rep said his organization had undertaken a project with the Istanbul Governorship to upgrade the crisis center and communication capacity. Both the Governorship and Municipality are also working on long-term challenges of rehabilitating buildings and enforcing earthquake resistant codes (also resulting from the 1999 earthquake).

17. (SBU) Another unique resource in Istanbul is the Kandilli Earthquake Research Institute, which is a key component of global seismic sensing networks, including 115 sensing stations in Turkey organized in cooperation with USGS. The center is working on an Istanbul Earthquake Rapid Response and Early Warning System, still in its testing phase, that aims to give rapid warning of significant seismic activity to major utilities and to provide quick damage assessment data.

National Key Actors - TEMAD and its Coordination Partners

¶18. (SBU) Under the umbrella of the Prime Ministry, TEMAD acts as the national central coordinating body for natural disaster preparedness for all relevant government bodies. TEMAD is also tasked to coordinate receipt and distribution of relief supplies from voluntary agencies. In the event of a serious national disaster, an ad hoc Crisis Coordination Board would be formed under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, with TEMAD as Secretariat, and including representatives of relevant ministries depending on the nature of the crisis.

¶19. (SBU) The General Directorate of Civil Defense under the Ministry of the Interior maintains its own crisis planning and center. One of its primary functions would be search and rescue missions. The Police and Gendarmerie would play a key role in any emergency, including responding to a major terrorist attack. TEMAD would not be assigned responsibility for a terrorist incident.

¶10. (SBU) The General Directorate of Disaster Affairs at the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement is responsible for risk mitigation measures in disaster prone areas and enforcement of building codes, preparedness (precautions for disaster shelter), and recovery (resettlement and reconstruction of housing for victims).

¶11. (SBU) The General Directorate of the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) has responsibility for organizing rapid disaster response and assisting in the delivery of international and national humanitarian aid. TRC has rebuilt itself after most of its management faced charges of irregularities in public tenders and abuse of office in the wake of the 1999 earthquake. TRC opened a new Emergency Operations Center (AFOM) outside of Ankara, modeled after the American Red Cross' Disaster Operations Center in Falls Church, Virginia.

¶12. (SBU) The Turkish Armed Forces can provide military assets in support of immediate response and humanitarian activities, as occurred in the initially weak GOT response to the 1999 earthquake. The National Security Council plays a key role in coordinating domestic and military resources for security. The Ministry of Health would provide medical and first aid support, including mobile emergency treatment units. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has its own crisis management center and is the first point of contact for the international community on damage and needs. MFA also

ANKARA 00003436 003.3 OF 003

provides coordination on the transportation of international relief aid.

COMMENT: Can They Work Together?

¶13. (SBU) The key question is how well these disparate entities (with their own structures, budgets, and agendas) can work together. Although created in 2000, TEMAD was effectively started only in 2003 with a modest budget and presence, and received full legal authorization only last year. TEMAD has organized regular training and disaster simulations to facilitate pre-disaster planning and coordination among critical agencies, holding a first national scale simulation in February, using a 23-day virtual scenario - over two days real time - and involving four Marmara Sea provinces. TEMAD designed and supported the exercise, which was hosted by the National Security Council. The MFA Disaster Officer told Embassy Officer that this simulation was highly useful in testing critical needs, particularly in communication. According to TEMAD, lessons learned included the need for more training, redundancies in communication, and protocols on how to communicate in a crisis. TEMAD aims to design and implement annual large-scale simulations, including actual field exercises, like

Director Hasan Ipek conducted as former Deputy Governor in Izmir (one involving 80,000 people).

Wilson